exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger;

466
731
651
[652]

it was used to buy materials and to pay travelling expenses and bonuses for officials. The fellaheen got no wages for their pains, no compensation for their enforced absence from the fields.

By law every Egyptian is liable to be enlisted in the fight against the flood danger. In fact, none but the fellaheen are ever called upon. However, according to the Speech from the Throne of May 1936, "No-one shall be employed henceforward on the embankments of the Nile or of the basins during the flood period without receiving appropriate payment [26]".

But there are other dangers which may threaten the prosperity of the country, cotton disease, for instance. To get rid of this pest a swarm of men, women and children must bend over the cotton plants from six o'clock till midday and from two o'clock till six, and search them row by row, plant by plant, leaf by leaf. Each infected leaf must be delicately nipped off and put into the lap of the *gallabiya*. If a single diseased leaf escapes notice the overseer just behind will see it and bring his stick down at once on the back of the culprit.

"I went up to one of these poor wretches toiling under the lash in the heat of the sun and asked him how much he got per day for his trouble: 2 piastres [26]".

In June 1936, for example, by virtue of the law of 1910, [27] a million young fellaheen were mobilised to save 435,785 feddans attacked by the pink worm [28], which devours the cotton bolls; it reproduces itself five times in a year. The Royal Agricultural Society is offering L.E. 20,000 to anyone who can find a remedy for this new plague of Egypt. Such a discovery would put an end to at least one sort of forced labour.

There is a third sort of emergency. About once every five years, the last time being in 1931 (the 1937 invasion was stopped in the desert), Egypt is attacked by vast swarms of locusts, which would destroy all the crops unless another host went out to meet them. Entire villages are transported to the worst affected areas (under the decree of 16th June 1891) to drive the swarms back to the desert or towards the sea. The method used consists in digging long trenches, keeping up smoke screens, shrieking, and flapping branches,

to prevent the locusts from settling and to hasten their departure. 466 731

A fourth case remains to be noted. It is usual, though not obligatory, for a fellah who wishes to keep in his omda's good books to work for him several days without pay. 651

The Fellah as Day Labourer

Day labourers are recruited *en masse* by a *rayess* or foreman to dig a canal, mend a road, or gather in a crop. Each man brings his own *fass*, and the whole gang carries out the required task under strict surveillance, like a gang of prisoners and often far from home. This drafting of men hired by a *rayess* into a locality where hands are short is called *tarhila*. For a twelve-hour day with a brief midday rest the pay is two or three piastres. A big landowner tells me that on his estate the fellaheen are usually paid three piastres a day, for either ploughing or working on cotton [29]. The *tarhila* is chiefly applied in Upper Egypt, where cotton is cultivated less, but labourers are more easily obtained and large estates are more common. It is also applied on State Domains which are under direct cultivation. 464 466 [465]

When day labourers are not attached to the estate they are subject to unemployment and want, except at times when big works make their help necessary. The more fortunate are engaged by the year, somewhat like the *obbligati* of Italy. Such men receive regular payment, partly in kind and partly in cash. For example, an owner lets a feddan to a fellah on credit. The wages for days spent at work for the owner are deducted from the rent payable. At the end of the year the fellah has a debit or credit according to the total of days he has worked. In other cases the fellah is paid only one piastre a day, but gets in addition the crop of maize from one feddan. 464

The temptation here is to work as little as possible. But it must be noted that owing to the abundance of hands the day labourer's wage remains extremely low. The changes due to the war have not increased it, and 5 piastres is a maximum rarely attained, whether for fellaheen, transport workers or small craftsmen [30]. Such wages are insufficient to support a fellah and his family, but a certain compensation is found in the traditional extras — the women's gleanings, 461 465

in the village, while the *Crédit Agricole* takes it at only 150 kg. as in the cities, and advances 130 piastres (1937 prices) on each *ardeb*.

Your cunning merchant proceeds to deposit the wheat, which he pretends to have harvested, in the *shoonas* of the bank. He thus gains 10 piastres and 25 kilogrammes of wheat on each *ardeb* bought, and without assuming any risks himself can confidently expect an additional premium at the time of sale by the *Crédit Agricole*.

There are no walls but only low ridges or channels dividing the fields of Egypt. In the same way there is no sharp division between the various kinds of labour which we have just been analysing. None of these categories is self-sufficient, and each overlaps the next. There are few fellaheen who do not pass from one to another, or belong at the same time to two of them. The very conditions of the fellah's life imply a certain similarity in them all.

(1) *Poverty*. Because he knows nothing of either foresight or economy, and even more because he is weak, isolated and ignorant, the strong and the rich reap the fruits of his labours. The bank or the moneylender, the Government, the *omda*, or the landowner, gathers in most, if not all, of what he has sweated to produce. He himself, to use one of his own sayings, remains "poor as a needle, which clothes others but itself remains unclad".

(2) *Dependence*. The fellah can plant neither what he wishes nor when he wishes. As a day-labourer he works in a gang at a definite task under the strictest supervision. As tenant farmer or share-cropper he plants his crops according to the owner's plan. As landowner he is dependent with regard to dates and choice of crops on the orders of the Ministry of Agriculture. He has no sort of liberty or initiative one way or the other.

(3) *The minimum standard*. However bad his affairs may be, the fellah is at least certain of his daily bread. No-one actually starves to death in the country; for even under the worst conditions of labour the natural resources of the land remain.

(4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (*).

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer sub-
466 ject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters.
671 There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the
636 fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century (*). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and
[651 taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah
681 is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows
731 how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has
661] suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to
[453] keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

8:Schaefw A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

At Work on the Excavations.

a) General.

539x
647
554
466

24.

1. The overseers, who are appointed by the Administration of Antiquities for every field of excavation, are often mere custodians from the museum, or something similar, but in their new position they often like to play the gentleman in their dress.

So this one has put on a ṭarbûsh, the red cap with a dark blue tassel, more familiar to us by the name of fez. [292]

He sits on an elevation, in order to gain a better oversight, and to be out of the dust.

Da-l-efendi ʾaʿid ʿala-l-ʿelwe
biṯ-ṭarbūš wer-raʾabe-l-ḥelwe.

See, the efendi sits upon the height,
With the ṭarbûsh and the sweet neck.

1. Efendi is properly the term of address for Turks (it is the Greek αὐθέντης), now commonly used for officials and all other men of some rank. [576]

2. The word "sweet" is used by the peasant about as frequently as it is by our school-girls. For comparison one should recall the sun-burned, callous neck of a genuine peasant (Vollers). [192]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

25.

[539] [461] [291] At work in the dust and heat, this longing sigh for the water-jug is quite intelligible. Of a hot day, one of the boys steals away every few minutes to snatch a hasty drink.

Ya ballaṣ aḥḍar u-mlān!
Ya giḍ'an, iḍ'u rēiskum.
Yalla ikfi šarr ez-zullām!

Thou moist, full water-jug!
You boys, beseech your overseer!
And thou, O Allah, make an end of the wickedness of the oppressors!

[192] 1. Aḥḍar has, beside its color-meanings green and gray (compare No. 21 note on l. 2) also the meaning "moist". For instance our servant, a youth from Saqqāra, would reply to the question: Is the wash dry? "Lā, lissa aḥḍar: No, it is still damp".

2. "Beseech" means, of course: "Beg him to stop the work".

26.

[651] [466] A reminiscence of the time when the excavations were carried on by forced labor (corvée). Not until the sun has run its course, can the workers hope for rest.

Ya samsē higgi, balāš dalḍ'a;
di šuṛlē mīri wa-la fīšē šafā'a.

Wander on, O sun, put aside your airs!
For this is forced labor and there is no intercession.

2. Others said here: da šuṛl uṣiye, that is to say: "labor on the crown-lands".

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

38.

×539
● 466

El-'afu, ya bē, yafendina,
win kunna 'ibna terabbīna;
win kunna uladak teraddīna!
Ya dōb es-sams tewaddīna.

I beg your pardon, O Bey, our master!
If we have done something badly, then reprove us;
And if we have been thy sons, then content us!
The sun will scarcely guide us (home).

[554] [570] 1. By using very high titles in addressing their masters the peasants often curry favor. Many of our people addressed us as "Bey" and it often happened that some poor devil, asking in fear and trembling for something, would proceed in one breath to the superlative thus: "ya bē, ya bāša, ya brinz": "bey, pasha, prince".

[593] 2. That is to say: "thy good sons". For the Egyptian, the adjective is superfluous, as sons usually behave very respectfully toward their father. Even sons who are but fairly well brought up, will not, in the presence of their father, either be seated, eat or smoke, without special command to do so.

2. 3. Another said: rabbīna, raddīna.